



PUBLIC HEALTH

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HEALTHIER WASHINGTON**

Study of Childhood Immunizations in
Washington State Russian-speaking Populations

Identifying the Problem

Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set

- Collected from 7 major health plans
- Captures the immunization status of infants and children (birth to two years) and the primary language spoken by the parents

Disparity found: Russian-speaking communities in Washington have the lowest childhood immunization rates of any population.

Formative Research

Assessing the priority population

Secondary research

- Literature review – Studies of our audience and similar ones

Primary research

- Key informant interviews – People who know our audience
- Parent focus groups – Directly from our audience

Literature Review

- Reviewed journal articles and other studies
 - Assessed recent Russian-speaking U.S. immigrants and people in Russian-speaking countries
- Used portion of PRECEED-PROCEDE to map contributing factors
- Used findings to help inform primary research and identify overall themes

Literature Review

Key findings (factors to non-vaccination)

- Misperceptions (Beliefs)
- Unsupportive media, websites, and doctors (Reinforcing influential sources)
- Government vaccination policies in countries of origin (Policy)
- Lack of available vaccines (Availability of resources)
- Mistrust of healthcare (Attitudes)
- Hard to understand U.S. healthcare system (access to information in Russian)
- Recommendations varied

Key Informant Interviews

- Interviewed 12 key informants
- Key informants represented various organizations and institutions (religious, academic, public health, clinical, and cultural)
- Assessed social life, culture, health beliefs, and focus group logistics

Key Informant Interviews

Key findings

- Russian-speaking communities are diverse
- Internet fuels mistrust, fear, and vaccine safety concerns
- Use “Russian-speaking” not “Russian”
- Language is a “somewhat” to “significant” barrier
- Russian-speaking communities are tight-knit
- Churches are central to many communities
- Russian-language media effective for reaching the priority population

Focus Groups

Facilitator and note-taker training

- Columbia Language Service
- Explain purpose, tips for success, moderator guide, and answer questions

Securing locations

- Visited recommended venues for environmental scans

Focus Groups

Recruiting parents

- Marketed focus groups multiple ways
- Screened for eligibility criteria

End result

- Four focus groups (Vancouver, Renton, two in Spokane)
- 36 participants (average 9 per focus group)
- 33 women and three men (parents of 114 children)

Focus Groups

Key findings

- Social networks main way vaccine info is shared
- Strong dissatisfaction with healthcare providers
- Parents want specifics on vaccine safety and relative risk
- Decisions made vaccine by vaccine
- Desire for community presentation
- Hear negative info and rumors about safety
- Feel uninformed, uncertain, and fearful of hurting their baby
- Think immunizations should be a choice, schedule starts too early, and don't like more than one vaccine per visit

Focus Groups

More key findings

- Language and culture affect access and communication
- Parents keep infants at home for protection
- Doctors listening and explaining deeply affects attitude
- If infants are sick, reluctant to vaccinate
- Home remedies in absence of healthcare
- Past experiences affect choices and conditions
- Anti-government feelings not a huge issue

Recommendations

Summary of recommendations

- Improving doctor-patient relationships may be most impactful
 - Empathy, explain details, choice, avoid being pushy, listen
 - Cultural competency tools for providers
- Provide resources to patient advocates in the community
- Community presentations
- Russian-language capacity on Child Profile e-mail newsletters
- Handout with best web resources in English and Russian

Recommendations

Summary of recommendations (continued)

- Printed materials in Russian to complement provider discussion
- Materials should address major questions and concerns:
 - Risk of the vaccine vs. seriousness of illness
 - Info on vaccine ingredients and diseases vaccines prevent
 - Safety, side effects, and effectiveness
 - Why vaccines are for infants
 - How they affect the immune system
 - Combinations and multiple doses
- “Plain Talk About Childhood Immunizations”

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